

Item 7 - Correspondence

From: [Tame Coalition](#)
To: [Harris, Artie](#); [MCP-Chair](#); [MCP-Chair](#)
Cc: [Tame Coalition](#); [Diane Cameron](#); [Tim Goodfellow](#); [Deby Sarabia](#); [Dial J Keju](#); [Kathleen Bender](#)
Subject: M83 Highway Agenda Item - TAME Coalition Request that the Planning Board Choose Option 3: Consider removing M83 from MPOHT based on 2017 Resolution and testimony already received
Date: Wednesday, October 2, 2024 12:42:51 PM
Attachments: [TAME Coalition ltr to Chair Harris Commissioners Choose Option 3 Remove Proposed M83 from MPOHT pdf.pdf](#)

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Dear Chair Artie Harris and Planning Board Commissioners,

Please see our letter attached for consideration of the October 3rd Planning Board agenda on removing Midcounty Highway Extended/M83 from the Master Plan of Highways and Transitways Technical Update 2024.

Respectfully,
Margaret Schoap

Margaret Schoap, Organizer

240-581-0518

Diane Cameron

301-933-1210

Tim Goodfellow

301-466-9527

Deborah Sarabia

240-778-5430

Kathleen Bender

301-875-6778

<http://www.tamecoalition.org/>



October 2, 2024

We Request that the Planning Board Choose Option 3: Consider removing M83 from MPOHT based on 2017 Resolution and testimony already received.

Dear Chair Harris and Planning Commissioners,

We were informed yesterday via an email from planner Sofia Aldrich, to our colleague Tim Goodfellow, about the planned additional worksession and possible additional public hearing regarding the status of proposed M83 highway in the upcoming Planning Board package of recommended changes to the Master Plan of Highways and Transitways (MPOHT).

The [staff report](#) entitled “*Master Plan of Highways and Transitways – 2024 Technical Update – Public Testimony Update*” listed three “options that the Planning Board could take regarding the feedback received on Midcounty Highway Extended.”

The three options (condensed) are:

- (1) Do not remove or consider removing Midcounty Highway Extended from the MPOHT.
- (2) Modify scope of MPOHT and hold additional public engagement including another hearing.
- (3) Consider removing M83 from MPOHT based on 2017 Resolution and testimony already received.

We request that you select Option 3. The exact wording of Option 3 is: **“Consider removing M83/ Midcounty Highway Extended from the MPOHT based on the Council’s 2017 Resolution and the testimony already received without the need to hold another public hearing.”**

TAME Coalition along with other groups and individuals, including Sierra Club, Action Committee for Transit, and Seneca Creek Watershed Partners in our testimonies at the September 12 hearing, requested that the Planning Board include removal of proposed M83/Midcounty Highway Extended in its package of recommended changes to the Master Plan of Highways and Transitways.

The reasons that we and our allied groups gave for the Planning Board recommending removal of proposed M83 highway from the MPOHT, include preserving the climate resilience forest of the Upcounty; avoidance of expanding urban heat islands and heat corridors; and, supporting the top goal of Thrive Montgomery 2050 which is to promote housing for all residents focused on Growth Corridors coupled with its core “people-centric” transportation goal which is to support alternatives to automobile travel, including expanded transit and walkable streets.

TAME Coalition and our allied groups have met repeatedly over the past year with you and your staff, and senior planners including Planning Director Jason Sartori; David Anspacher; Sofia Aldrich; and Khalid Afzal. In the span of years leading up to, and during, the deliberations over proposed policies in Thrive Montgomery 2050, we also met with other planning staff, along with former Planning Board

Chairs and Commissioners. In all of those meetings, we requested removal of proposed M83 highway from the master plans, focused on its removal from the MPOHT.

To our knowledge, the normal public comment process has been followed for this MPOHT revision project. Those who are potentially interested in this topic had chances to participate and weigh in with staff and Commissioners, over the same course of time that we and our colleagues had. **The task now before you is to consider removing M83 from the MPOHT – based upon the public testimony you already received.**

Sincerely,

Margaret Schoap, Organizer

Margaret Schoap, Organizer

240-581-0518

Diane Cameron

301-933-1210

Tim Goodfellow

301-466-9527

Deborah Sarabia

240-778-5430

Kathleen Bender

301-875-6778

<http://www.tamecoalition.org/>



Transit Alternatives to Mid-County Highway Extended

From: [Diane_Cameron](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#); [Aldrich, Sofia](#)
Cc: [TAME Coalition](#); [Margaret Schoop](#); [Tim Goodfellow](#); [Deby Sarabia](#); [kathleenbender@gmail.com](#); [dialkeju@me.com](#); [karen.metchis](#); [Alex Zeineddins](#); [Darian Unger](#); [Al Carr](#)
Subject: Written Comment Requesting Removal of Proposed M83 Highway from the Master Plan of Highways and Transitways
Date: Thursday, September 26, 2024 12:35:37 PM
Attachments: [8tHw3Lh7moAKx.png](#)
[Cameron testimony 9.12.2024.to Plannina Board Remove Proposed M83 Hwy from MPOHT.pdf](#)

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Dear Chair Harris and Ms. Aldrich,

Attached is the written version of my spoken testimony delivered at the 9/12/2024 Planning Board hearing on proposed changes to the Master Plan of Highways and Transitways (MPOHT).

My testimony provides two additional reasons, on top of the many reasons given by my colleagues, for you to recommend removal of proposed M83 highway from the MPOHT:

(1) Pedestrian Safety; and (2) Green Social Housing in Upcounty Transit Corridors.

The hearing draft of the MPOHT staff draft, states:

The public hearing record will remain open until Thursday, September 26, 2024 at 5p.m. for additional testimony to be submitted to the Planning Board. Planning Staff will summarize the testimony and conduct the first work session with the Planning Board on October 17, 2024.

Thus, I request that this written testimony be included in the public hearing record for this topic.

Thank you,

Diane Cameron

Kensington, Maryland

**Testimony of Diane Cameron Requesting Removal of Proposed M83 Highway
from the Master Plan of Highways and Transitways**

**Hearing of the Montgomery County Planning Board
Thursday, September 12, 2024**

I join with my colleagues in TAME Coalition (Transit Alternatives to Midcounty Highway Extended), Sierra Club, Seneca Creek Watershed Partners, Action Committee for Transit, and County Executive Marc Elrich, in asking you to recommend removal of proposed M83/Midcounty Highway Extended, in its entirety, from the Master Plan of Highways and Transitways. Two additional reasons are pedestrian safety and social housing:

(1) Pedestrian Safety:

The staff draft proposes to re-name proposed M83 highway to “Boulevard” with a target speed of 35 mph. Target speed is one thing, actual speed is another. But even at 35 miles per hour, there is significant risk of severe injury or death in collisions with pedestrians.

In February 2020, I attended a memorial service organized by Action Committee for Transit, for a pedestrian killed on Midcounty Highway near Pier Point Place. Adonias Gomez was a 62-year-old resident of Gaithersburg; his extended family members told us how he had supported them.

The loss of Mr. Gomez and other victims of car crashes, moves us to make all of the changes required for Vision Zero – and, to remove from master plans, proposed new highways that if built would only add to crash statistics. ***Improving – not worsening - pedestrian and cyclist safety is a top reason why you must remove proposed M83/Midcounty Highway Extended from this and other master plans.***

(2) Green Social Housing:

Route 355 between Clarksburg and Montgomery Village is included in Thrive Montgomery 2050 as one of the places for “Corridor-Focused Growth” that “should have the largest share of new growth”.

Let’s use this policy to create green social housing projects at a scale to fully meet the need, served by Bus Rapid Transit within the Route 355 Growth Corridor.

Preserving Great Seneca Stream Valley Park and other parks, by removing proposed M83 highway from the MPOHT, is an essential step in creating green social housing in the Upcounty.

As a first step on this path, we must remove proposed M83 highway from the MPOHT, because as long as it remains in master plans, it clouds the planning horizon with the spectre of a highway project, impeding progress in making socially just investments in housing, transit, and walkable neighborhoods.

Removing M83 clears the way to invest in affordable housing accessible to the Seneca Creek Greenway Trail and other public parks and forests now threatened by M83.

Taking these steps demonstrates *inclusionary planning in the Transportation sphere*, and clears the planning horizon to support the mobility, health, and well-being of residents who do not drive.

From: [Eileen Finnegan](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#); [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Resend: Comment on Master Plan of Highways and Transitways: Please Correct Elton Road Segment Classification & ROW
Date: Tuesday, September 24, 2024 10:12:05 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

My address is 10404 Sweetbriar Parkway, Silver Spring, MD

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: Eileen Finnegan <finnegan20903@yahoo.com>
To: MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org <mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org>
Cc: Stephen Aldrich <stephen.aldrich@montgomeryplanning.org>; David Anspacher <david.anspacher@montgomeryplanning.org>
Sent: Tuesday, September 24, 2024 at 09:45:53 PM EDT
Subject: Comment on Master Plan of Highways and Transitways: Please Correct Elton Road Segment Classification & ROW

Hello Chair Harris,

I am writing to formally ask for a correction for a roadway segment in the Hillandale area. I submitted the problem to Planning Staff during the early public input via the map comment phase, and followed up with a plat sent to Mr Aldrich. It appears the issue has not been addressed to date since the Appendix A continues with this error.



The road segment is Elton Road from Avenel Gardens Lane to the county line. During the White Oak Science Gateway Master Plan, this segment was rightfully changed from commercial to residential. But a big error was made in the residential classification!

This segment of Elton Road is basically a "neighborhood-yield street" in both Montgomery and Prince George's County with a dedicated right-of-way in both counties of 50' built to 30' without sidewalks. Prince George's Public Works has informed me that Elton is simply a residential street, not a Primary Residential Roadway. As a residential street, it is not formally classified or part of that county's transportation master plan. The r-o-w is confirmed at 50' and the built street is under 30'. Having a 70' r-o-w would make the Montgomery County homes non-confirming since the setback would be impacted, AND compensation for the homeowners would be required.

Please update this segment of Elton Road in the 2024 Master Plan of Highways. The correction should confirm the 50' r-o-w and use as a "neighborhood yield street", or simply removed from the list.


Regards,
Eileen Finnegan

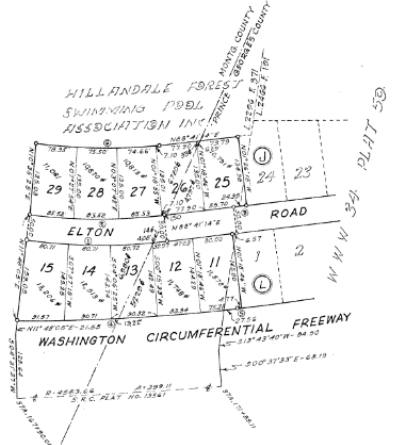
ENGINEERS CERTIFICATE

We hereby certify that the plan shown hereon is correct, that it is a subdivision of the following deeds to Hillendale Forest Inc. (1) Part of the land conveyed by William W. Mays et al by deed dated February 9, 1959 and recorded in Liber 2286 of Folio 371 among the Land Records of Prince George's County, Maryland. (2) Part of the land conveyed by deed dated June 4, 1959 and recorded in Liber 2214 of Folio 404 among the Land Records of Prince George's County, Maryland and in Liber 2466 of Folio 191 among the Land Records of Montgomery County, Maryland by Bird H. Dolby, attorney in fact for Francis S. Branne and Etta Branne (Power of Attorney dated August 7, 1950 and recorded in Liber 1258 of Folio 453 and that it is a resubdivision of part of Parcel 12 as shown on a plat of Avenel Gardens recorded in State Book 37 Plat 2530 among the Land Records of Montgomery County, Maryland and that iron pipes marked thus  and stakes marked thus  are in place as indicated hereon.

The area included in this plan of subdivision is 3.1194 Acres.

Date: Sept 1, 1959

By: 
Dore E. Hodkin
Professional Engineer
and Land Surveyor
No. 1185



OWNERS DEDICATION

We, Hillendale Forest Inc., a Maryland Corporation, by Ralph J. Duffie, President and Violetta P. Duffie, Secretary, owners of the property shown and described hereon hereby adopt this plan of subdivision, establish the minimum building restriction lines and dedicate the streets to public use.

There are no suits of action, leases, liens or trusts on the property included in this plan of subdivision.

Date: April 2, 1959
Attest: Violet P. Duffie, Secretary
By: Ralph J. Duffie, President

NO.	AREA	ACRES	PERCENT
1	1.0000	1.0000	32.08
2	1.0000	1.0000	32.08
3	1.0000	1.0000	32.08
4	1.0000	1.0000	32.08
5	1.0000	1.0000	32.08
6	1.0000	1.0000	32.08
7	1.0000	1.0000	32.08
8	1.0000	1.0000	32.08
9	1.0000	1.0000	32.08
10	1.0000	1.0000	32.08
11	1.0000	1.0000	32.08
12	1.0000	1.0000	32.08
13	1.0000	1.0000	32.08
14	1.0000	1.0000	32.08
15	1.0000	1.0000	32.08
16	1.0000	1.0000	32.08
17	1.0000	1.0000	32.08
18	1.0000	1.0000	32.08
19	1.0000	1.0000	32.08
20	1.0000	1.0000	32.08
21	1.0000	1.0000	32.08
22	1.0000	1.0000	32.08
23	1.0000	1.0000	32.08
24	1.0000	1.0000	32.08
25	1.0000	1.0000	32.08
26	1.0000	1.0000	32.08
27	1.0000	1.0000	32.08
28	1.0000	1.0000	32.08
29	1.0000	1.0000	32.08
TOTAL	3.1194	3.1194	100.00



The area of street dedicated to public use by this plat is: 30.645 ±



MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION
PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY PLANNING BOARD
APPROVED: JANUARY 20, 1960
M-N.C.P. & P.C. RECORD FILE NO. 5-60007

FILED
PART OF BLOCKS J I L
HILLDALE FOREST
PRINCE GEORGE'S & MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MD.
SCALE 1" = 100'
MARCH, 1959
MADDOX & HODKINS ENGINEERS
SILVER SPRING, MARYLAND



From: scott.plumer@verizon.net
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Master Plan of Highways and Transitways - 2024 Technical Update - Public Hearing 9/12/2024
Date: Friday, September 13, 2024 2:18:40 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[MPOHT Spoken 240912 4.pdf](#)

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Darnestown Civic Association spoken testimony is attached. Written testimony previously submitted.

Scott Plumer

Staff Assistant for Research and Strategic Projects
Darnestown Civic Association Executive Board and Committees
Participant Vision Zero Darnestown, a project of the Darnestown Civic Association's
Roads Task Force
14100G Darnestown Road Darnestown MD 20874
scott.plumer@verizon.net



Participant Vision Zero Darnestown, a project of the Darnestown Civic Association's Roads Task Force. We intend to eliminate vehicle involved death and severe injury while increasing safe, healthy, equitable mobility for all.

PLEASE

Slow Down Put the Phone Down Be Courteous Be
Visible

Spoken 240912

Thank you. For the record my name is Scott Plumer. I am representing the Darnestown Civic Association.

We wish to thank Chair Harris, Vice Chair Pedoeem, and the rest of the board for allowing us to testify today. We also wish to thank Director Sartori and the entire Montgomery Planning staff for their exceptional work, which we enjoy every day, as we live our lives in Montgomery County.

We have worked with Sofia, Andrew, David and others since the early days of the Complete Streets Design Guide work effort. The MPOHT work is best in class community collaboration.

We need your direct support. It is a long journey from target speeds to posted speeds to observed speeds. Context based design standards are best when they are informed of current conditions. Although most of your work on standards appears to apply to new construction, most severe injuries and deaths appear to occur in currently built places.

Target speeds are a reference point. In practice, it is more useful from a safety perspective if they are context sensitive. With your support we can start in a good place with a safe systems approach to target speeds.

We have stepped through the roads in our community, pavement marking by pavement marking, and sign by sign. We have submitted a detailed response to the draft update for each MPOHT road segment in our community. Some of our suggested changes have

been incorporated in the draft. Many of them have not. We also call for more granularity in some segments.

Getting people to slow down, pay attention, and be courteous is incredibly difficult. Each time we miss an opportunity to provide a behavioral cue to make safer choices, we endanger everyone on the road. Speed limit targets are an integral part of a complex design set of controls. We know you will ensure each and every segment, and each and every target speed is given due consideration.

The work we do here is vital to Vision Zero. Our objective is safe, equitable mobility.

To give you an idea of the incongruences we see in the draft, I am going to quickly walk you through a few segments.

We start at Darnestown Road MD 28 westbound at Quince Orchard Road MD 124. The intersection is loaded; an MCPS high school, a library, and three corners of retail. I call these areas Civic and Commercial Cores. Posted speed on MD 28 is 30, draft target speed higher at 40. From there to just before the MD 28 junction with Riffle Ford Road where it then narrows from a four-lane road into a two-lane road, the posted speed increases from 30 to 40. Yes, just before an intersection and the road narrowing to two lanes, the posted speed increases. Just after the intersection the draft target speed is lowered to 35. 35 is a welcome reduction, as the road enters one, of the two, high injury network segments in Darnestown.

From here, we proceed past a few residential neighborhood intersections to the start of our civic and commercial core. The posted speed here is 30, with a speed camera, draft target speed,

higher at 35. Just down the hill is an intersection of long-standing, and utmost concern for our community. So concerning in fact, we were approached earlier in the year by the principal of the elementary school, director of the early school, and director of a church, all located at the intersection's southwest quadrant and they were joined by a pastor at another church, and the CEO of yet another church and school, and asked us to write a letter to our elected representatives about the dangerous condition of the intersection. Posted speed 30, draft target speed, higher at 40.

The draft target speed is then higher at 40, all the way through the civic and commercial core. Details, are in our written testimony.

One more example. On Germantown Road MD 118 headed east from Darnestown Road towards Germantown the posted speed is 30 with a speed camera, and two schools, draft target speed, higher at 40. Again, details, are in our written testimony.

You can see how easy it is to get target speeds, and posted speeds wrong, especially on segments which transition through steep density gradients. We should do our best to get as many target speeds and segments correct as possible, even if it means creating more segments. When it is impractical to do so, we should specify the lower speed as the target, not the higher speed.

Moving on from target speeds, and in addition to our written testimony, we have two additional items. We request a high resolution full view MPOHT Mapbook be made available, so we can zoom in and see detail for a wider area as an alternative to stepping through specific Mapbook pages one at a time.

Lastly, as this Technical Update continues to codify the county's Country Area, we want to be on the record with concerns over parts of Darnestown being changed from Country to Suburban. We ask you to instruct staff to review how these areas became reclassified, and to work with the community and our Councilmembers to ensure these actions are in concert with community needs, our master plan, other countywide plans, and the new general plan.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Scott Plumer

Staff Assistant for Research and Strategic Projects
Darnestown Civic Association Executive Board and Committees
Participant Vision Zero Darnestown, a project of the Darnestown Civic Association's Roads Task Force
14100G Darnestown Road Darnestown MD 20874
scott.plumer@verizon.net



Participant Vision Zero Darnestown, a project of the Darnestown Civic Association's Roads Task Force. We intend to eliminate vehicle involved death and severe injury while increasing safe, healthy, equitable mobility for all.

PLEASE

Slow Down Put the Phone Down Be Courteous Be Visible

From: [karen metchis](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Cc: [Branda, Ilana](#)
Subject: MPOHT: Written Testimony from Sierra Club - for the record
Date: Friday, September 13, 2024 8:19:53 AM
Attachments: [Sierra Club m83 Testimony-09122024.docx](#)

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Mr. Harris, et al,

Attached is my written testimony that I delivered at the public hearing on Sept. 12 on behalf of the Montgomery County Sierra Club. Please enter this into the record. Thank you.

From: Karen Metchis, Executive Committee Member, Montgomery County Sierra Club
To: Mr. Artie Harris, Chair, Montgomery County Planning Board
Re: Master Plan of Highways and Transitways - Testimony
Date: September 12, 2024

Hearing Date: September 12, 2024

I am Karen Metchis, speaking on behalf of the Montgomery County Sierra Club. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

We ask you to remove the proposed Midcounty Highway Extended/M83 in the technical update to the Master Plan of Highways and Transitways.

In 2017, the County Council passed Resolution 18-957-Transportation Solutions for Northwest Montgomery County.

The Resolution directed the Planning Department not to assume any additional road capacity for the northern extension of M83 when calculating the land use / transportation balance in future master plans.

As such, the existence of M83 in the MPOHT is a relic of the past, and therefore *technically* this should be included in this technical update. This can be achieved efficiently now.

As long as M83 remains part of this master plan, future Councils could revive it.

Should this highway ever be built, it would destroy or degrade forests, streams and wetlands in Germantown, Gaithersburg and Montgomery Village. It would cause severe fragmentation of valuable wildlife habitat; and damage five popular public parks, 100 acres of bio-diverse interior forest, and the Seneca Creek Greenway Trail.

If we are serious about prioritizing efforts to curb climate change, then we must make every effort - including updating our plans and policies to reflect the reality of climate change.

- We must reduce vehicle miles traveled, not build more highways - especially since the transportation sector is the single largest contributor of greenhouse gases.
- We must retain our forests rather than removing them - as would happen with the construction of M83, resulting in loss of their many ecosystem services including carbon sequestration, cooling the planet, filtering our water, and many other social and environmental benefits.

Now is the time to do this simple fix. Remove M83 in the Master Plan of Highways and Transportation and let's get serious about controlling climate change.

Thank you on behalf of the Sierra Club, our members, and supporters.

From: [Christel Bivens](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Planning Board M-83 Testimony - CHRISTEL BIVENS GERMANTOWN MD
Date: Thursday, September 12, 2024 6:03:22 PM
Attachments: [UpcountyPlanningBoard.M83Testimony,091224.BIVENS.docx](#)

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

To Whom It May Concern,

Please accept my thoughts on M-83 as my testimony. Thank you. Copy of email has been pasted in Word Document attached as well.

To Whom It May Concern:

It has come to my attention this afternoon that the County's Master Plan of Highways and Transitways is currently being updated, with a Planning Board public hearing on September 12, 2024, followed by the Plan's transmittal to the County Council in the fall. I would like this letter to serve as my testimony on this subject.

As a resident of Germantown for almost 30 years, across from the Great Seneca Valley Stream Park (Brink and Blunt Rd), I have experienced the exponential increase of traffic down my once rural community road (Brink Road) due to the increased development from Montgomery Village, Clarksburg, and surrounding communities because M-83 was not built according to the plan. Upon purchasing my property, I pulled the Montgomery County MD Master Plan because I spied a Blue sign designating property near my home as a future Interconnector. I spoke to a few planning board employees and asked if I should be concerned about the additional traffic from all the proposed development in Montgomery Village and Clarksburg, the answer given is that the Master Plan dictated an intercounty connector as an extension of the current intercounty connector (that was being built at the time despite opposition), that would be implemented in tandem with the additional development and that I, "need not be worried about additional traffic from development due to M-83 as it was part of the master plan". THIS I could live with. I also saw that the designated property had already been acquired by the county and I saw where the highway would be built. I did my due diligence and was satisfied that the purchase of my home was going to be my "forever home".

I am an avid community integrator. I currently serve on the UpCounty Citizens Advisory Board as the Chair. I seek the concerns of my community and communities around me to foster information and transparency for resolutions with the County officials. I have been told that this Master Plan update is the prime instrument for removing M83 highway from County land use plans. This most certainly can NOT happen. The lacking road infrastructure which was supposed to be built to ACCOMMODATE the new development in Clarksburg and surrounding areas has not been attended to by Planners but instead put on the back burner, forgotten. Forgotten with little thought to what traffic has defaulted and migrated to community roads that were never designed to carry this traffic safely or effectively. Additionally, the planning department as of recent has approved another 60,000 units being developed within a 5-mile radius of my residence/community. The planning department knows that the traffic in Upcounty is severe because the road infrastructure has not been put in place. Specifically, M-83.

Over the past 30 years, I watched my once quite rural community road (Brink Rd) turn into one of the most highly traveled roads that have increased traffic pollution, critical accidents, noise pollution, loss of life in a traffic accident, and damage to personal property due to accidents. Police Commanders in District 4, 5, & 6 agree that this is one of the more dangerous and heavily accident-prone roads in Up County. I have personally fronted discussions with MCDOT and successfully

reduced the speed limit on Brink Rd to make this road safer from 40pmh to 35pmh but without enforcement and moving excessive traffic to better road systems, accidents and safety issues are paramount.

So, why is Brink Rd and Wightman Rd overrun with traffic? M-83 was never built. The only road that connects Montgomery Village to Germantown and Clarksburg is Brink Rd out of default. This was NOT THE PLAN in the Master Plan. M-83 was supposed to be the infrastructure put in place *in which* to develop. Montgomery County planning allowed all this development without the infrastructure in place and made Brink Rd the new intercounty connector. The repercussion of this decision means that the Planning Department forced traffic safety into our hands each day we egress in and out of our driveways and crossroads to access Brink Rd. The speeds on this road, by MCDOT research, show that most speeds are in excess of 45 mph when the speed limit is only 35 and the number of accidents on this through-way is one of the highest accident-prone areas in Up MOCO. All because M-83 was not built and because the planning department did not take our safety as a primary concern. Brink Rd is on the cusp of the Germantown and Gaithersburg Master Plan and absolutely no thought has been given to this road but it has by default become the primary road used to get cross county. A road that was NEVER designed to house this much traffic nor specified a safe road due to the curves, hilly topography, no shoulders, no turn lanes, two-lane road without curbs, a bridge, and a heavily pedestrian-crossed road at the Great Seneca Valley Stream Park.

While I understand TAME and the Village are the biggest advocates for taking M-83 off the books of the Master Plan and they have the money and advocacy to support it and I am only one person, I urge you to recommend BUILDING and KEEPING the MidCounty Highway Extended ("M-83) in the current Master Plan of Highways and Transitways, 20224 Technical update during your deliberations and discussions and final vote transmittal to the Montgomery County Council.

The proposed M83 highway would remove defaulted traffic from secondary roads that were never intended to capacitate this level of traffic. M83 was designed to implement a safe traffic pattern at high level of egress between the current intercounty connector and UpCounty. UpCounty infrastructure has been a second thought for Montgomery County planners, and we are now under duress from not having this primary road infrastructure in place. The climate, pollution to our community environment, and noise pollution have taken away our once peaceful enjoyment and our pursuit of happiness.

M83 highway's retention in the Master Plan of Highways and Transitways invites its future construction which will:

- Decrease the level of accidents on the default use of Brink Road while also decreasing the severity of the accidents due to the topography that does not promote higher speed traffic and turns and the volume of traffic
- It would use the property that has already been set aside by the county and communicated to all residents near this land without taking over other property that was never intended to be part of the road right away.
- Take advantage of turn lanes already built in Clarksburg/Germantown to gain access to M-83 where traffic currently is diverted down Brink Rd.
- Reduce the destruction of significant natural resources and habitats—woodlands, floodplains, wetlands, stream systems, forested slopes, residential property--that are critical for climate resilience and quality of life for County residents – by reducing traffic over a dilapidating bridge and allowing safe pedestrian egress in Great Seneca Valley Stream Park rather than diminishing the natural resources available to us currently due to dangerous traffic
- Increase traffic flow similarly and consistently to the current intercounty connector services, understanding that the planning board will again place their best efforts to reduce the severity of existing parks as they did on the current intercounty connector
- Increase in air quality and excessive pollution that community residents have had to endure since M-83 has not been built in the Goshen area.

The Montgomery County Council's 2017 Resolution (No. 18-957, Transportation Solutions for

Northwest Montgomery County) prohibits the use of the proposed M83 highway in Master Plans, land development projects, and for addressing future roadway capacity needs and regional traffic movements. The 2017 Resolution nullifies and negates M83's utility in land use planning. The next logical step is to remove M83 from the Master Plan of Highways and Transitways.

I am not opposed to realistic alternatives to the proposed M83 highway and would encourage using my position with UCAB to gain community insight and progress in identifying those alternatives using the land set aside. But alternative Bus Rapid Transit on MD 355 to Clarksburg and MARC train service and road enhancements alone will not solve the significant problems due to default traffic patterns that have evolved to take the traffic that M-83 would have alleviated off secondary roads. Alternates proposed destruction to our communities, and properties, increased pollution, and destruction to Great Seneca Valley Stream Park.

yet we have been burdened with a lack of planning and building of the infrastructure in the Master Plan we all bought into when buying our properties. M83 road system needs to be built. Period. It can't be taken off the books. Don't kid the residents and drivers or yourselves – it simply will not be enough unless this interconnector is built.

Instead of doing away with the M83 highway, please focus on the people who have been burdened by the lack of planning and building of the road infrastructure, and who continue to endure the default traffic migration that would otherwise used M-83. The delay in building this road (or the concept of even taking it away) has already made our lives and community lacking in peace and safety, landscape-dissenting, escalated pollution (both with climate and noise) which are against transportation policies set, for back communities that are not front and center with 270 and 355, but yet take the burden of displaced traffic.

Building new infrastructure and transportation systems congruently with public transportation on main arteries is the essence of smart growth and sound planning for our future. Future planning should not occur without this important road built or more lives and damage to property will occur with unsafe traffic migration onto our community roads. Please fulfill your role as planning LEADERS for Montgomery County and endorse the building of the M83 highway in the Master Plan of Highways and Transitways.

Sincerely,

Christel Bivens

21026 Blunt Road

Germantown, MD 20876

240-988-0819

cbivens@gmail.com

To Whom It May Concern:

It has come to my attention this afternoon that the County's Master Plan of Highways and Transitways is currently being updated, with a Planning Board public hearing on September 12, 2024, followed by the Plan's transmittal to the County Council in the fall. I would like this letter to serve as my testimony on this subject.

As a resident of Germantown for almost 30 years, across from the Great Seneca Valley Stream Park (Brink and Blunt Rd), I have experienced the exponential increase of traffic down my once rural community road (Brink Road) due to the increased development from Montgomery Village, Clarksburg, and surrounding communities because M-83 was not built according to the plan. Upon purchasing my property, I pulled the Montgomery County MD Master Plan because I spied a Blue sign designating property near my home as a future Interconnector. I spoke to a few planning board employees and asked if I should be concerned about the additional traffic from all the proposed development in Montgomery Village and Clarksburg, the answer given is that the Master Plan dictated an intercounty connector as an extension of the current intercounty connector (that was being built at the time despite opposition), that would be implemented in tandem with the additional development and that I, "need not be worried about additional traffic from development due to M-83 as it was part of the master plan". THIS I could live with. I also saw that the designated property had already been acquired by the county and I saw where the highway would be built. I did my due diligence and was satisfied that the purchase of my home was going to be my "forever home".

I am an avid community integrator. I currently serve on the UpCounty Citizens Advisory Board as the Chair. I seek the concerns of my community and communities around me to foster information and transparency for resolutions with the County officials. I have been told that this Master Plan update is the prime instrument for removing M83 highway from County land use plans. This most certainly can NOT happen. The lacking road infrastructure which was supposed to be built to ACCOMMODATE the new development in Clarksburg and surrounding areas has not been attended to by Planners but instead put on the back burner, forgotten. Forgotten with little thought to what traffic has defaulted and migrated to community roads that were never designed to carry this traffic safely or effectively. Additionally, the planning department as of recent has approved another 60,000 units being developed within a 5-mile radius of my residence/community. The planning department knows that the traffic in Upcounty is severe because the road infrastructure has not been put in place. Specifically, M-83.

Over the past 30 years, I watched my once quite rural community road (Brink Rd) turn into one of the most highly traveled roads that have increased traffic pollution, critical accidents, noise pollution, loss of life in a traffic accident, and damage to personal property due to accidents. Police Commanders in District 4, 5, & 6 agree that this is one of the more dangerous and heavily accident-prone roads in Up County. I have personally fronted discussions with MCDOT and successfully reduced the speed limit on Brink Rd to make this road safer from 40pmh to 35pmh but without enforcement and moving excessive traffic to better road systems, accidents and safety issues are paramount.

So, why is Brink Rd and Wightman Rd overrun with traffic? M-83 was never built. The only road that connects Montgomery Village to Germantown and Clarksburg is Brink Rd out of default. This was NOT THE PLAN in the Master Plan. M-83 was supposed to be the infrastructure put in place *in which* to develop. Montgomery County planning allowed all this development without the infrastructure in place and made Brink Rd the new intercounty connector. The repercussion of this decision means that the

Planning Department forced traffic safety into our hands each day we egress in and out of our driveways and crossroads to access Brink Rd. The speeds on this road, by MCDOT research, show that most speeds are in excess of 45 mph when the speed limit is only 35 and the number of accidents on this through-way is one of the highest accident-prone areas in Up MOCO. All because M-83 was not built and because the planning department did not take our safety as a primary concern. Brink Rd is on the cusp of the Germantown and Gaithersburg Master Plan and absolutely no thought has been given to this road but it has by default become the primary road used to get cross county. A road that was NEVER designed to house this much traffic nor specified a safe road due to the curves, hilly topography, no shoulders, no turn lanes, two-lane road without curbs, a bridge, and a heavily pedestrian-crossed road at the Great Seneca Valley Stream Park.

While I understand TAME and the Village are the biggest advocates for taking M-83 off the books of the Master Plan and they have the money and advocacy to support it and I am only one person, I urge you to recommend BUILDING and KEEPING the MidCounty Highway Extended ("M-83) in the current Master Plan of Highways and Transitways, 20224 Technical update during your deliberations and discussions and final vote transmittal to the Montgomery County Council.

The proposed M83 highway would remove defaulted traffic from secondary roads that were never intended to capacitate this level of traffic. M83 was designed to implement a safe traffic pattern at high level of egress between the current intercounty connector and UpCounty. UpCounty infrastructure has been a second thought for Montgomery County planners, and we are now under duress from not having this primary road infrastructure in place. The climate, pollution to our community environment, and noise pollution have taken away our once peaceful enjoyment and our pursuit of happiness.

M83 highway's retention in the Master Plan of Highways and Transitways invites its future construction which will:

- Decrease the level of accidents on the default use of Brink Road while also decreasing the severity of the accidents due to the topography that does not promote higher speed traffic and turns and the volume of traffic
- It would use the property that has already been set aside by the county and communicated to all residents near this land without taking over other property that was never intended to be part of the road right away.
- Take advantage of turn lanes already built in Clarksburg/Germantown to gain access to M-83 where traffic currently is diverted down Brink Rd.
- Reduce the destruction of significant natural resources and habitats—woodlands, floodplains, wetlands, stream systems, forested slopes, residential property--that are critical for climate resilience and quality of life for County residents – by reducing traffic over a dilapidating bridge and allowing safe pedestrian egress in Great Seneca Valley Stream Park rather than diminishing the natural resources available to us currently due to dangerous traffic
- Increase traffic flow similarly and consistently to the current intercounty connector services, understanding that the planning board will again place their best efforts to reduce the severity of existing parks as they did on the current intercounty connector

- Increase in air quality and excessive pollution that community residents have had to endure since M-83 has not been built in the Goshen area.

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From: [Cunanan, Erika](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Cc: [Aldrich, Sofia](#); [Peckett, Haley](#); [Pitts, Corey](#); [Bossi, Andrew](#); [Iseli, Claire](#); [Wellington, Meredith](#); [Tibbitts, Dale](#); [Olsen Salazar, Kara](#)
Subject: MPOHT Public Hearing Draft - MCDOT Comments
Date: Thursday, September 12, 2024 3:06:16 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)
[image003.png](#)
[image004.png](#)
[image005.png](#)
[image006.png](#)
[image007.png](#)
[image008.png](#)
[MPOHT Public Hearing Draft - MCDOT Comments 9.12.2024.pdf](#)

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Good afternoon,

On behalf of Haley Peckett, Deputy Director of Transportation Policy, Department of Transportation (MCDOT), please see the attached memo regarding the Master Plan of Highways and Transitways Public Hearing Draft – MCDOT Comments.

Thank you,

Erika Cunanan

Senior Executive Administrative Aide

Montgomery County Department of Transportation
Office of the Director
[101 Monroe St, 10th Floor](#)
[Rockville, Maryland 20850](#)
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Marc Elrich
County Executive


Christopher R. Conklin
Director

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

MEMORANDUM

September 12, 2024

TO: Artie Harris, Chair
Montgomery Planning Board

FROM: Haley Peckett, Deputy Director for Transportation Policy
Department of Transportation (MCDOT) 
Haley Peckett (Sep 12, 2024 14:30 EDT)

SUBJECT: Master Plan of Highways and Transitways
Public Hearing Draft – MCDOT Comments

Thank you for the opportunity to review the July 2024 Public Hearing Draft of the Master Plan of Highways and Transitways (MPOHT). We appreciate the efforts throughout this process to obtain feedback on the proposed changes. We offer the following comments:

- 1) **M-83:** We recommend the removal of the extension of M-83 (Midcounty Highway) between Montgomery Village Avenue and Ridge Road. We believe our ongoing investments in transit along MD 355, as well as other Corridor Connectors identified in the I-270 Corridor Forward Plan, all represent a more sustainable path forward for connecting the Clarksburg, Germantown, and Gaithersburg areas.
- 2) **GROWTH CORRIDORS:** We support the intent of Growth Corridors to benefit transit ridership with more urban street layouts and denser blocks. However, Growth Corridors also risk penalizing upstream transit riders as their buses must stop at more of these denser intersections.

We strongly urge that the application of these corridors be limited in length to areas where BRT stations are within overlapping walksheds. Where BRT stations are more distant, in lieu of classifying a full corridor as a Growth Corridor street type, we suggest selectively apply Town Center classifications around station areas. This may allow urban

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design and land use around BRT stations while reducing the impedances between activity centers.

The Growth Corridor street types must also not be put into effect unless corresponding land use densities have been approved. The additional densities are necessary to justify the operational impacts of the more urban street design, and we expect both to be implemented concurrently.

- 3) **OLD COLUMBIA PIKE:** Consider reducing the number of planned lanes along Old Columbia Pike between Stewart Lane and Tech Road from 4 lanes to 2 lanes. The four lanes were planned by the White Oak Science Gateway Plan, and at the time we noted the impracticality of such widening. Since that time, Thrive Montgomery 2050 has deprioritized widening roads to four lanes, and our ongoing CIP project is unlikely to move forward with a four-lane alternative.
- 4) **RAILWAY ROW:** Consider including rights-of-way along the CSX and Red Line corridors in the Appendix (*p86*). It can be difficult to assess right-of-way needs on developments alongside these corridors due to the inconsistent availability of this information. Centralizing the right-of-way requirements in this document will assist with gradually implementing long-term master planned efforts such as third tracking the Brunswick Line and extending the Red Line to Germantown.
- 5) **BRT COMMENTS:** Detailed comments on the transit elements are as follows:
 - a. **MD 355 North** (*p121*) – We have an ongoing Facility Planning study looking at adding a reversible BRT lane along MD 355 north of Ridge Road. This draft MPOHT, however, shows all stations along MD 355 being eliminated in favor of a pair of stations along Snowden Farm Parkway. It may be premature to eliminate these stations before the Facility Planning study is completed.
 - b. **MD 355 North** (*p121*) – The station at Stringtown Rd / St. Clair Rd is currently expected to be a potential infill station. Removing it may make it difficult to add in the future.
 - c. **New Hampshire** (*p118-119*) – The FDA-Lockwood Connector may be in one of several alignments:
 - One alignment is as shown, between the commercial and residential properties but aligning with FDA behind their secured area.
 - Another alignment would align opposite FDA’s loop road.

- A third alignment might align with Michelson Road’s north-south segment. We are grateful to see this connection included in the master plan, but the narrative on p118 should note these other options. Our ongoing design work with the New Hampshire BRT is currently evaluating the options.
- d. **US 29 (p124)** – We do not currently expect a station at FDA as part of the US 29 BRT corridor. However, such a station *is* likely as part of the New Hampshire BRT corridor. Consider removing the Lockwood-FDA Connector and the FDA Station from the US 29 portion of this Plan but include them in a newly added pair of pages for the New Hampshire BRT. What’s currently shown on p124 risks giving the impression that the US 29 BRT will directly serve FDA’s frontage.

cc: Corey Pitts, MCDOT
Andrew Bossi, MCDOT
Claire Iseli, CEX
Meredith Wellington, CEX
Dale Tibbitts, CEX
Kara Olsen-Salazar, DGS
Sofia Aldrich, Montgomery Planning